Many in the public are surprised to learn that mental health problems can and do occur in young children. This is true for children who are typically developing as well as for children with developmental differences. For a variety of reasons, including a lack of awareness of age-appropriate norms and expectations and stigma, these problems are often unrecognized or misunderstood and therefore go untreated. This lack of recognition is particularly true for youth with developmental differences, including autism. This is unfortunate, since sound mental health provides the foundation for all aspects of a child’s development, and early treatment increases the likelihood of positive outcomes (Center for the Developing Child, ZERO TO THREE).

Project SUCCEED aims to address this critically important public health issue by offering training to a diverse group of individuals in Colorado who touch the lives of young children. Trainings focus on recognizing mental health challenges experienced by young children who are typically developing or have developmental disabilities, learning effective ways to respond to tantrums, meltdowns, or other challenging or aggressive behaviors, understanding when a referral to a mental health professional may be warranted, knowing how to connect with referral resources in the state.

Overview of Training Series

Module 1: Setting the Stage for a Shared Meaning of iECMH
Module 2: Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity Considerations
Module 3: Caregiving Relationships and Early Brain Development
Module 4: Child and Family Development
Module 5: Early Adversity and Toxic Stress
Module 6: Identifying and Understanding Developmental Differences in Young Children
Module 7: Addressing Developmental Differences and Mental Health Symptoms
Module 8: Resources and Referrals

Study Goal

The goal of this project is to evaluate qualitative and quantitative survey data to explore themes in the trainee community, potential differences by trainee demographic and professional experience, and overall satisfaction with the training.

This information will be used to monitor the contents that need to be revised or presented differently for future cohorts to ensure focus on mental health signs and symptoms, strategies and skills, and understanding how to respond to certain behaviors.

Methods

Qualitative data analysis was conducted by coding the responses to three open-ended post-training survey questions asked after each module across two training cohort series. In Series One, broad theme and category codes were created by two team members. After In Series One, broad theme and category codes were created by two team members. After In Series One, broad theme and category codes were created by two team members. After In Series One, broad theme and category codes were created by two team members. After

Introduction

Conclusions

In conclusion, satisfaction and knowledge gained were high without differences in demographic profile or professional experience, indicating this foundational training is useful across all levels of experience and demographic groups.

Every Learned common theme in each module was directly correlated to the foundational information that we hoped they would learn or take with them. This indicated that this training provided participants with the education it planned to provide. The most common Ah-Ha themes were similar and overlapped with the most common Learned themes, indicating that these foundational topics were also providing new or reminder insights for training participants.

Across all modules, participants consistently reported wanting to know more about available supports and resources for families and/or providers in the Wonder theme. To address this need, Project SUCCEED created a Resource Canvas for participants to access.

Overall, between the common themes, satisfaction, and knowledge gained, participants learned the intended foundational topics. We also had high ratings of “strongly agree” and “agree” to gaining knowledge on the topic and being satisfied with the information learned.

References


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